

GUEST OPINION ARTICLE

The following short, simple piece is for use when an organization asks you for a pre-written article for their publication. Sample uses include: community or coalition-member newsletters, corporate or union newsletters, or even a local newspaper.

The article is directed towards the general public. It provides an overview of the *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air* initiative and the importance of everyday actions that can result in improved air quality and reduced traffic congestion. The article also provides a point of contact for more information.

Sample Guest Opinion Article

HOW TO IMPROVE THE AIR WITHOUT REALLY TRYING

Would you be willing to combine your errands into one trip to help contribute to cleaner air and less traffic congestion in the *(community name)* area? Trip chaining is just one of the many actions you can take, and probably already are taking, that help improve the quality of our air.

Nationally, more than 25 percent of air pollution comes from on-road vehicle emissions. Although cars are cleaner than ever before, the *(name of local coalition or sponsoring organization)* believes individual actions can help reduce pollution and traffic congestion in *(community name)*.

(Insert quote from a local program spokesperson that stresses the effect travel choices have on air quality and how the public's participation is an integral part of the solution, e.g., "It is important that we realize how much our own travel choices affect air quality and traffic congestion. We can be part of the solution by taking a few easy steps that can improve the air quality in (community name). Every little bit helps if we all pitch in," said (name, chairperson of your coalition or sponsoring organization).)

Consider these facts:

- When you first start your car after it's been sitting for more than an hour, it pollutes up to five times more than when the engine's warm. That's why combining errands into one sensible trip is more efficient and reduces air pollution.
- A poorly maintained or malfunctioning car can release as much as 100 times the pollution of a well-maintained car. Regular car maintenance will ensure that your car runs as efficiently as it can, and it prevents breakdowns.
- Sharing rides, taking mass transit, and biking and walking for short trips are actions many of us are already taking that can reduce traffic congestion and air pollution.
- In hot weather, gasoline vapors escape during refueling and, mixed with sunshine and heat, create ozone, an air pollutant that can be harmful to our lungs. By refueling your car's gas tank during cooler periods of the day and in the evening, you can help to reduce this air pollution.

The *(name of coalition or organization)* provides the public with information about the connection between travel choices, air quality, and traffic congestion through a public education and information program called *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air*. Although the program has been launched locally, it is part of a national transportation and air quality initiative that is supported by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. *(Community name)* has joined this major clean air initiative because of *(organization's name)* commitment to informing the public about the connection between air quality and transportation

and because the initiative addresses air quality problems such as *(identify problems)* which exist in *(name of area)*.

Join in to help improve the air quality and reduce traffic in our community. For more information on the *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air* program or to receive a “Ten Simple Steps” flyer, contact *(local contact name and phone number)*.